



DEFIANT

4

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**SPECIAL
48-PAGE
ISSUE!**

CHARLEMAGNE



nemogriffen

@

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ADAM
DILLIN
BOB
WAKER

NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS

THERE'S A GOOD BOOK
THAT'S GOT A WARNING--

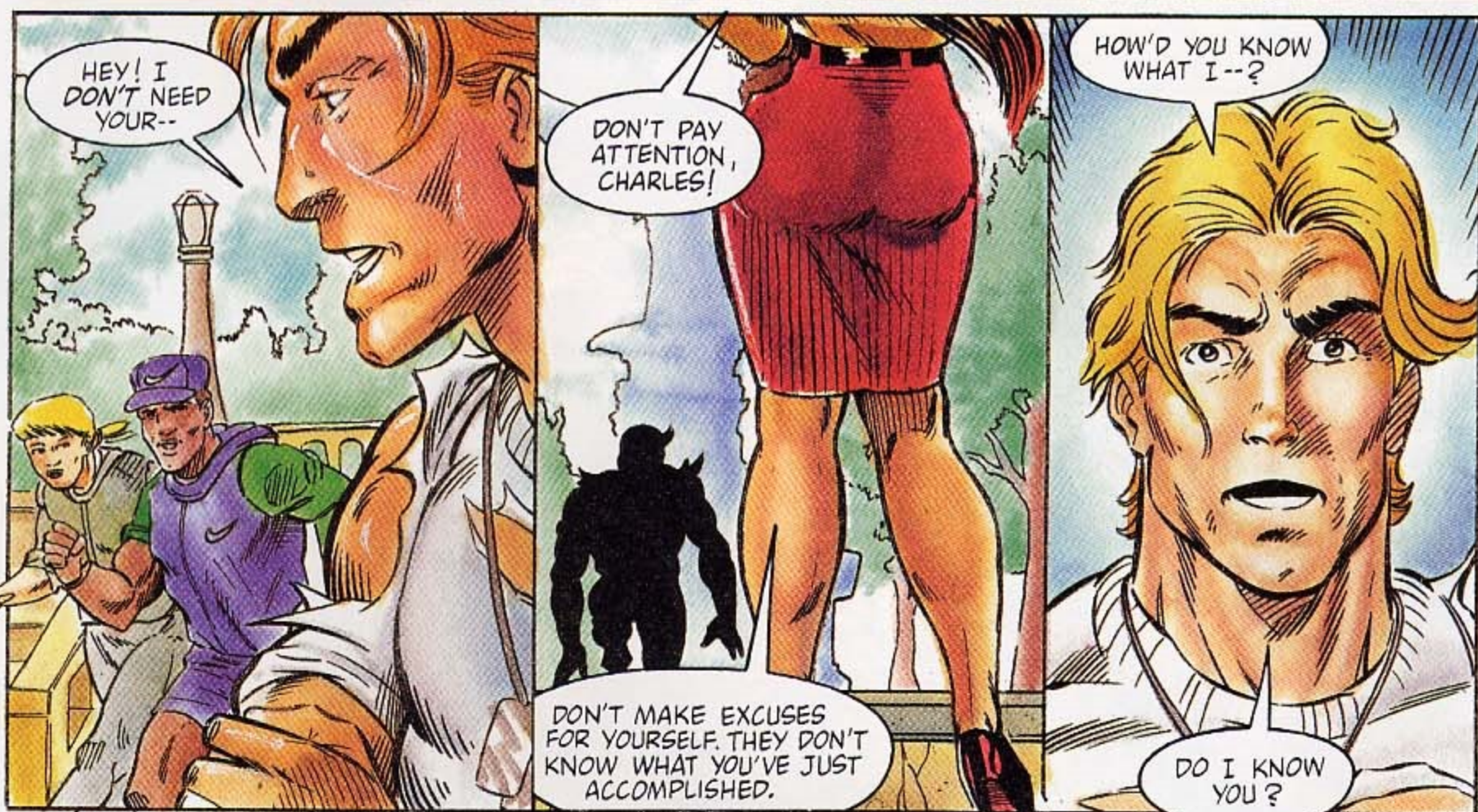
--"...ENTER NOT INTO TEMPTATION"
THE SPIRIT INDEED IS WILLING,
BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK.

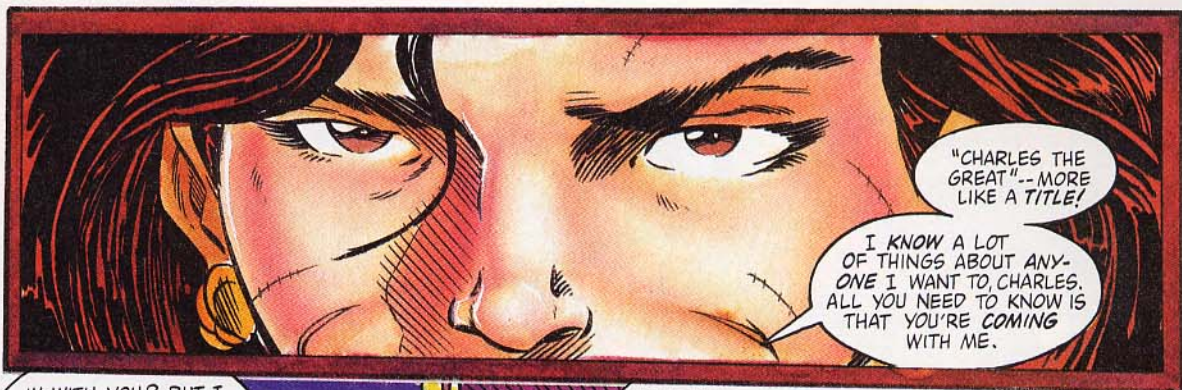
AS A BOY, CHARLES SMITH'S INDOMITABLE
SPIRIT SENT HIM TO WARTIME VIETNAM,
IN SEARCH OF HIS M.I.A. BROTHER.

THAT JOURNEY COST
HIM AND 18 YEARS,
BUT MIRACULOUSLY
BOUGHT HIM A BODY
CHARGED WITH POWER--

--AND RIPE FOR SEDUCTION.
WISH CHARLES SMITH LUCK...
HE'S GOING TO NEED IT.

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"CHARLES THE GREAT"--MORE LIKE A TITLE!

I KNOW A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT ANYONE I WANT TO, CHARLES. ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.

W-WITH YOU? BUT I HAVE TO F-FIND THE DANCER--FINISH HIM BEFORE HE DESTROYS--THE WORLD--

WITH YOU... OKAY... ALL RIGHT...

YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEST, CHARLES... I RESPECT THAT, BUT FIGHTING THE DANCER... I'M SORRY, I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES... OR WHAT HE MEANS TO ME! COME WITH ME NOW AND I'LL--

YOU'LL--LET HIM DESTROY IT ALL! WIPE IT ALL AWAY! N-NO. GET OUT--



GET OUT OF MY HEAD!

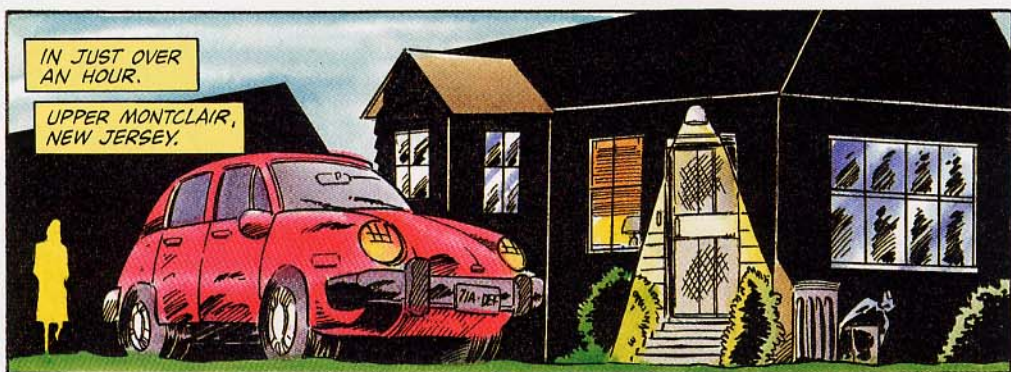


NO ONE'S EVER BLOWN OFF MY "SUGGESTIONS" LIKE THAT BEFORE!

THEN AGAIN, NO ONE ELSE HAS GOT THE STRENGTH OF WILL TO TAKE ON THE DANCER, EITHER!



C-COME BACK! TELL ME WHY! COME...



IN JUST OVER
AN HOUR.

UPPER MONTCLAIR,
NEW JERSEY.



LAY OFF
ALREADY,
I'M--



--COOKIE?!?

HIYA,
SIS!



YOU FALL
OFF THE FACE
OF THE EARTH
FOR GOD KNOWS
HOW LONG --

HOME
SWEET
HOME



--AND I
GET "HIYA,
SIS!"?

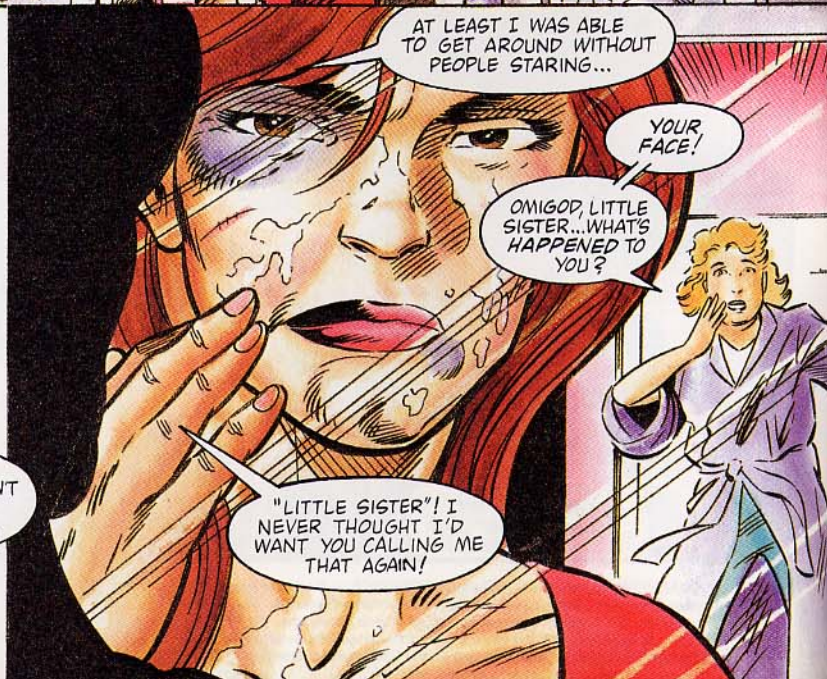


THE "FACE
OF THE EARTH"
DOESN'T MEAN WHAT
IT USED TO, RUTH,
BELIEVE ME!



COOKIE,
WE'VE ALL
BEEN WORRIED
SICK!

THE
MAKE-UP WASN'T
A BAD IDEA,
CONSIDERING.




AT LEAST I WAS ABLE
TO GET AROUND WITHOUT
PEOPLE STARING...

YOUR
FACE!


OMIGOD, LITTLE
SISTER...WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO
YOU?

"LITTLE SISTER"! I
NEVER THOUGHT I'D
WANT YOU CALLING ME
THAT AGAIN!



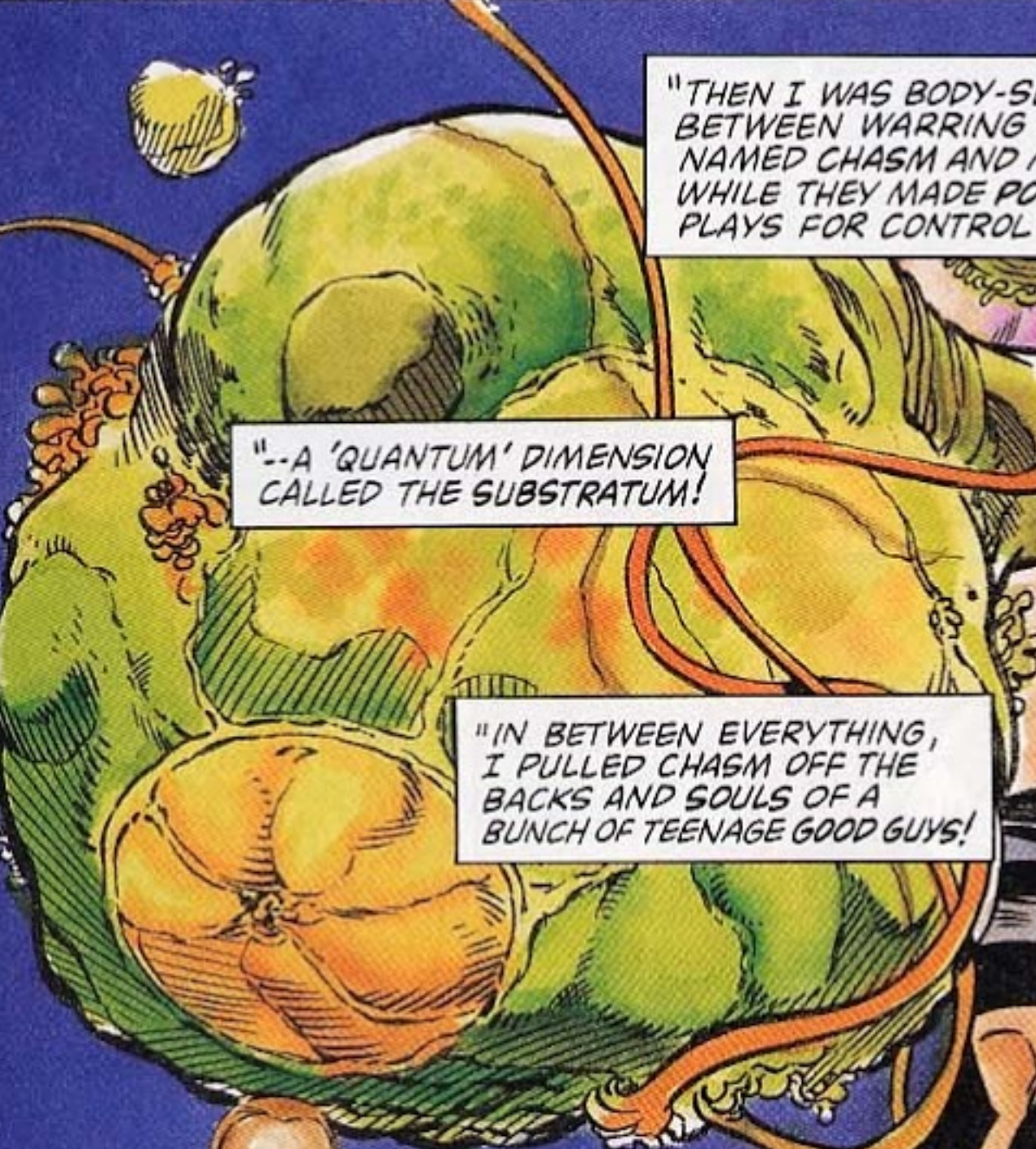
BUT WHEN ALL
YOU'VE BEEN CALLED
IS "NUDGE" FOR
SO LONG...

DO YOU WANT
TO START ANYWHERE
REMOТЕLY NEAR THE
BEGINNING?



"IT'S TOUGH TO FIND A
STARTING PLACE IN A BLUR!"


"IT ALL STARTED FIGHTING A
WAR ON A WORLD CALLED
THE ORG! AFTER WE WON,
IT ONLY GOT WORSE!"




"THEN I WAS BODY-SLAMMED
BETWEEN WARRING TYRANTS
NAMED CHASM AND MULE
WHILE THEY MADE POWER
PLAYS FOR CONTROL OF--

"--A 'QUANTUM' DIMENSION
CALLED THE SUBSTRATUM!"


"IN BETWEEN EVERYTHING,
I PULLED CHASM OFF THE
BACKS AND SOULS OF A
BUNCH OF TEENAGE GOOD GUYS!"



"BUT WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT
IN ALL THIS IS HIM-- AHRQ
TSOLMEC!"




THE
DANCER...MY
PRINCE...



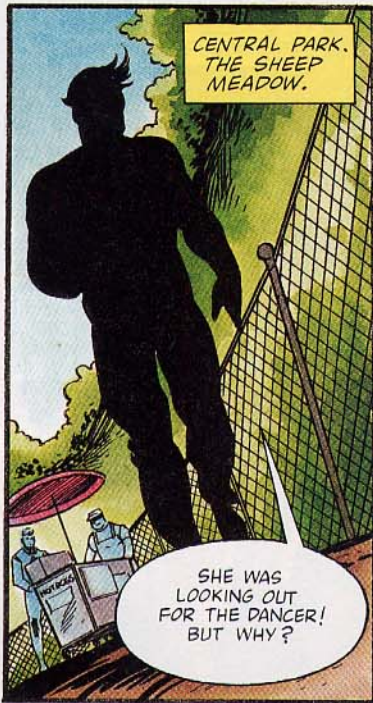
PRINCE?! YOU
ALWAYS DID HAVE
A LADY DI FIXATION,
COOKIE!

LOOK,
MAYBE YOU
NEED SOME, UH...
HELP? Hmm?



THANKS, RUTH,
BUT I'VE GOT IT
ALL UNDER
CONTROL!

CHARLES SMITH,
THOUGH... HE'S ABOUT
TO LOSE IT...



CENTRAL PARK.
THE SHEEP
MEADOW.

SHE WAS
LOOKING OUT
FOR THE DANCER!
BUT WHY?



WHY WOULD
ANYONE THROW IN
WITH WHAT HE IS--
DEATH TO EVERYTHING!
AND I PROMISED
TO STOP HIM...

SPIKE IT
NOW!



THRASHWHIP
HIM!

FOOTBALL
FAN?



GIVING IT A
CHANCE.

TOO
VIOLENT?



NOT BY WHERE I
COME FROM! EVER TRY
SPLATTERBALL?

MORE A
BASEBALL MAN,
MYSELF.

"FOOT" BALL.
I AT LEAST
EXPECTED
DISMEMBER-
MENT.



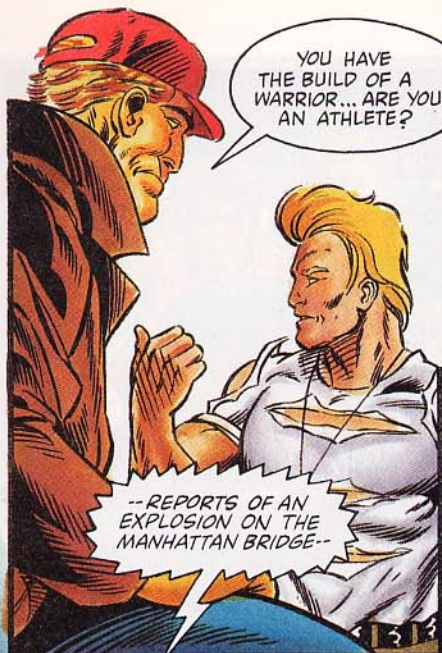
C-CAN'T THINK
STRAIGHT...IN
MY HEAD...

LENNY
YOU SORRY
LAME--



HERE YOU GO, GUYS!
THIS SHOULD KEEP THE
GAME MOVING!

IN TODAY'S
NEWS--



YOU HAVE THE BUILD OF A WARRIOR... ARE YOU AN ATHLETE?

--REPORTS OF AN EXPLOSION ON THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE--



NO, I'M CHARLES SMITH! JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE--TRYING TO GET BY, TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL!

AND I AM GRIMMAX.

NOT TO BE RUDE, BUT... YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU BELONG HERE!



NOT TO BE RUDE... BUT THEY SEEM TO THINK THE SAME ABOUT YOU!



I--IN MY HEAD--

--OFF THE PLAYIN' FIELD! OUTTA THE WAY!



K
R
A
A
M



NICE JOB,
YOU SORRY
PIECE A'--

-- LOOK WHAT
YOU DONE TO MY
RADIO!

HEY! YOU
TACKLED ME RIGHT
INTO IT!



DON'T LET
'EM DIS YOU,
LENNY!

WE'LL
BACK
YOU UP!

BREAK MY
BOX, NOW YOU
GET IN MY
FACE!?



GOT SOMETHING
TO SAY NOW?!

YOU THINK THEM
DOG TAGS MAKE
YOU SOME KINDA
ONE MAN ARMY?



YOU THINK YOU'RE
GONNA HAVE A PROBLEM
USING TOILET PAPER WITH
A BUSTED HAND?

KRAK



EYAARGK



YOU SHOULD'VE SETTLED
FOR JUST THE RADIO
GETTING BUSTED!





VIETNAM,
HO CHI MINH CITY.



WITH THE TRADE
RESTRICTIONS LIFTING,
I THINK THERE'S GOING
TO BE SOME GREAT
OPPORTUNITES--

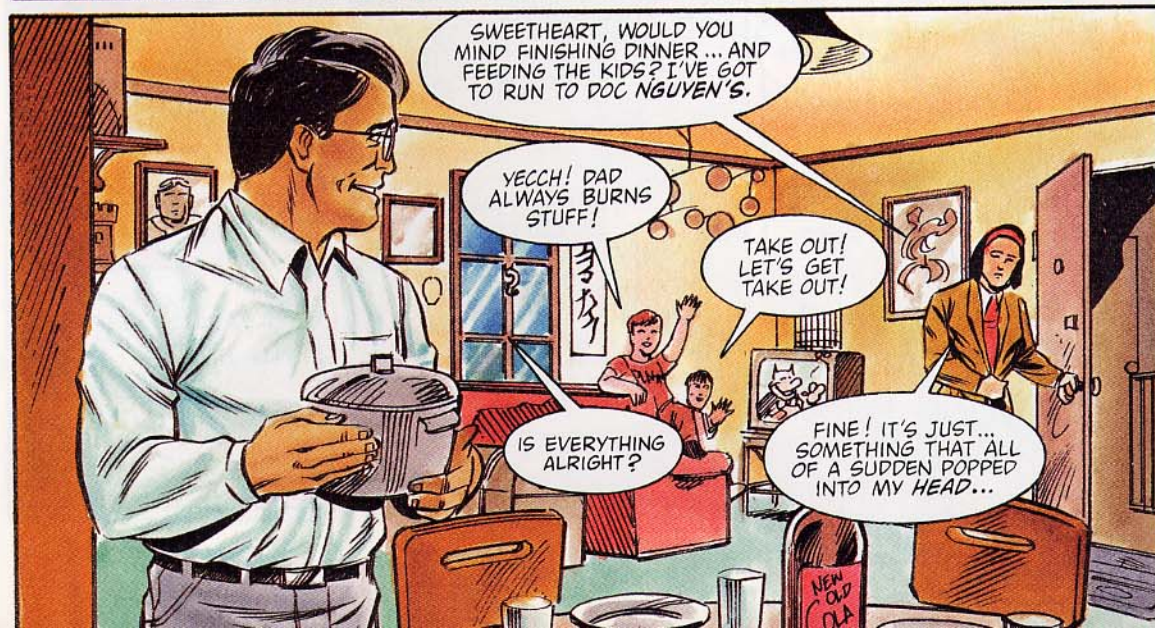


-- I'M SORRY, HON!
I'M RUNNING OFF AT
THE MOUTH AGAIN ABOUT
BUSINESS! AND YOU'VE STILL
GOT THAT HEADACHE...

NO, PHAN, GO
ON! I'M ACTUALLY
FEELING A LOT--



--B-BETTER--



SWEETHEART, WOULD YOU
MIND FINISHING DINNER... AND
FEEDING THE KIDS? I'VE GOT
TO RUN TO DOC NGUYEN'S.

YECCH! DAD
ALWAYS BURNS
STUFF!

TAKE OUT!
LET'S GET
TAKE OUT!

IS EVERYTHING
ALRIGHT?

FINE! IT'S JUST...
SOMETHING THAT ALL
OF A SUDDEN POPPED
INTO MY HEAD...



THE BIG APPLE.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE HAD A DAY, PAL!

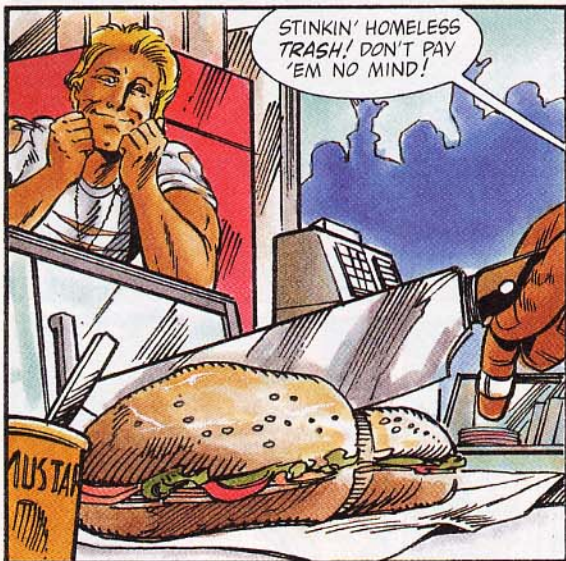
LIKE YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW!

FOR WHAT I'VE HAD TO GO THROUGH, I'M REWARDING MYSELF WITH MY FIRST NEW YORK DELI SANDWICH!



YOU MEAN... YOU NEVER? STOP THINKIN' HEALTHY, AND START YOUR DROOLIN' FROM NOW, BUDDY!

HM. LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE!



STINKIN' HOMELESS TRASH! DON'T PAY 'EM NO MIND!



FEAST YOUR EYES ON A TASTE TREAT THE LIKES A'--

GUESS THEY KNOW YOU PUT ON QUITE A SHOW, HUH?



GET OUTTA HERE, YOU WALKIN' EXCREMENT! GO EAT SOME GARBAGE!

ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU LOSE YOUR APPETITE, HUH?



YEA! BUT I BET SOME LEAN CORNED BEEF AND RUSSIAN DRESSING FIRES IT BACK UP, AM I RIGHT? ENJOY!

THANKS! I WILL--

SPECIAL TRY GUMBY SOUP

THE FRIENDLY EXCHANGE
DIES ON CHARLES' LIPS.

THE DOOR SLIPS SHUT,
SEALING HIM OUT ON
THE STREET.

ALL HE CAN HEAR NOW ARE
THE WHISPERS. HE CAN'T MAKE
OUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

MAYBE THEY'RE NOT EVEN
WORDS. BUT THEY'RE NEEDY,
GROPING, GRASPING.

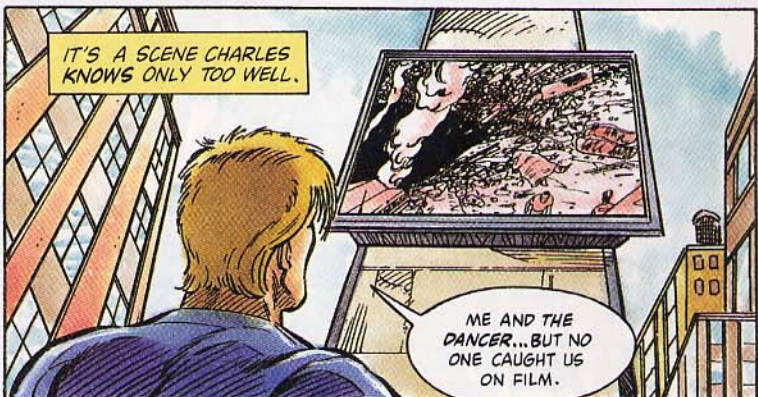
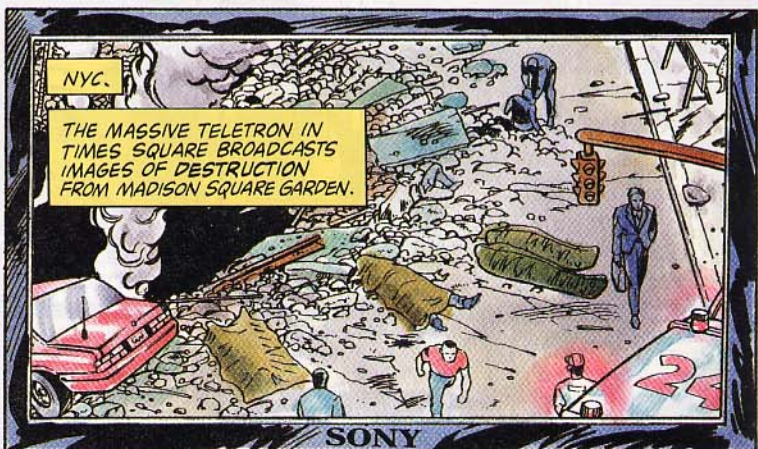
IT'S MORE OF A BURDEN THAN
THE 14 YEAR OLD BOY DEEP
INSIDE WANTS TO DEAL WITH.

TAKE IT!
TAKE IT, I DON'T
WANT IT!

YOU'RE THE
ONE -- OUR HERO!
RESCUE US FROM
THIS!

AND CHARLES FINDS HIMSELF
WISHING FOR A WAY TO FREE
HIMSELF FROM THE CHARGE
HE'S TAKEN ON.

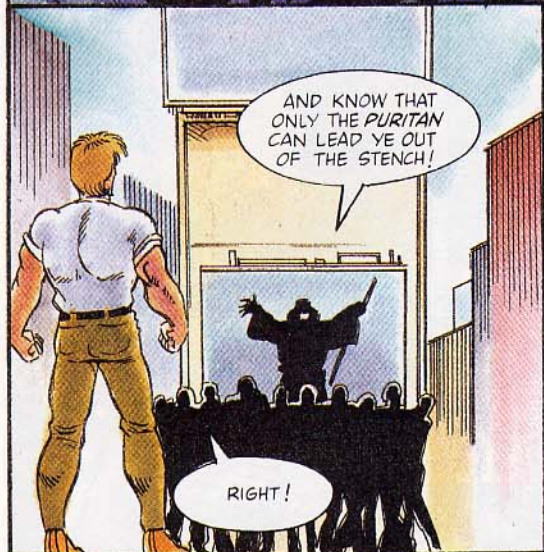
A WAY TO ESCAPE
WHAT HE'S BECOME...





BUT WHO NEEDS TV WHEN THERE'S LIVE ENTERTAINMENT?

BREATHE IN THE SIN FROM ALL AROUND, BROTHERS AND SISTERS!



AND KNOW THAT ONLY THE PURITAN CAN LEAD YE OUT OF THE STENCH!

RIGHT!



I'LL STICK TO "SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN" RERUNS!



AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 11613.



STRINGS HAVE BEEN NOT SO MUCH PULLED AS YANKED.

VISAS PROCURED WITHOUT QUESTION. TICKETS ISSUED WITHOUT COST.



THE YOUNG WIFE AND MOTHER HAS NO THOUGHT OF HER FAMILY.



HER MIND IS FILLED ONLY WITH DESIRE...

... FOR CHARLES SMITH.

WORLD TRADE CENTER,
LOWER MANHATTAN.



THE ONLY GUY I KNOW
IN NEW YORK, AND I DON'T
PAY ATTENTION TO
WHERE HE LIVES!



HEY,
BIG
GUY!

CHARLES!

SURPRISE!



RECON... FLEX...
SPELLCASTER!

I COULD
USE SOME
FRIENDLY
FACES!

ALL OF
A SUDDEN...
IT'S LIKE WE
HAD TO SEE
YOU!

I EVEN KNEW
'ZACTLY WHERE TO
HAVE MY DOOR
TAKE US!

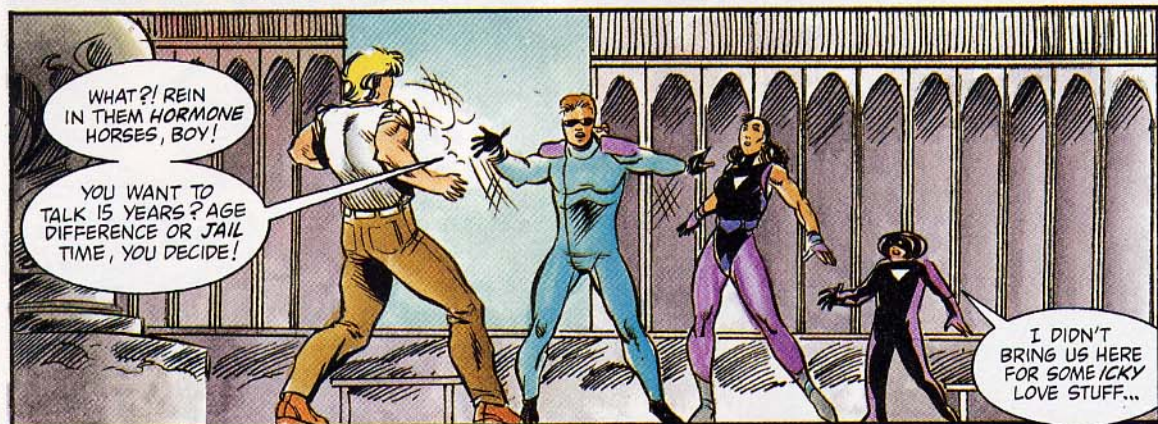
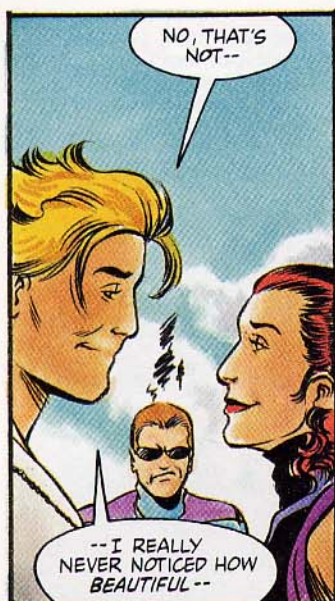


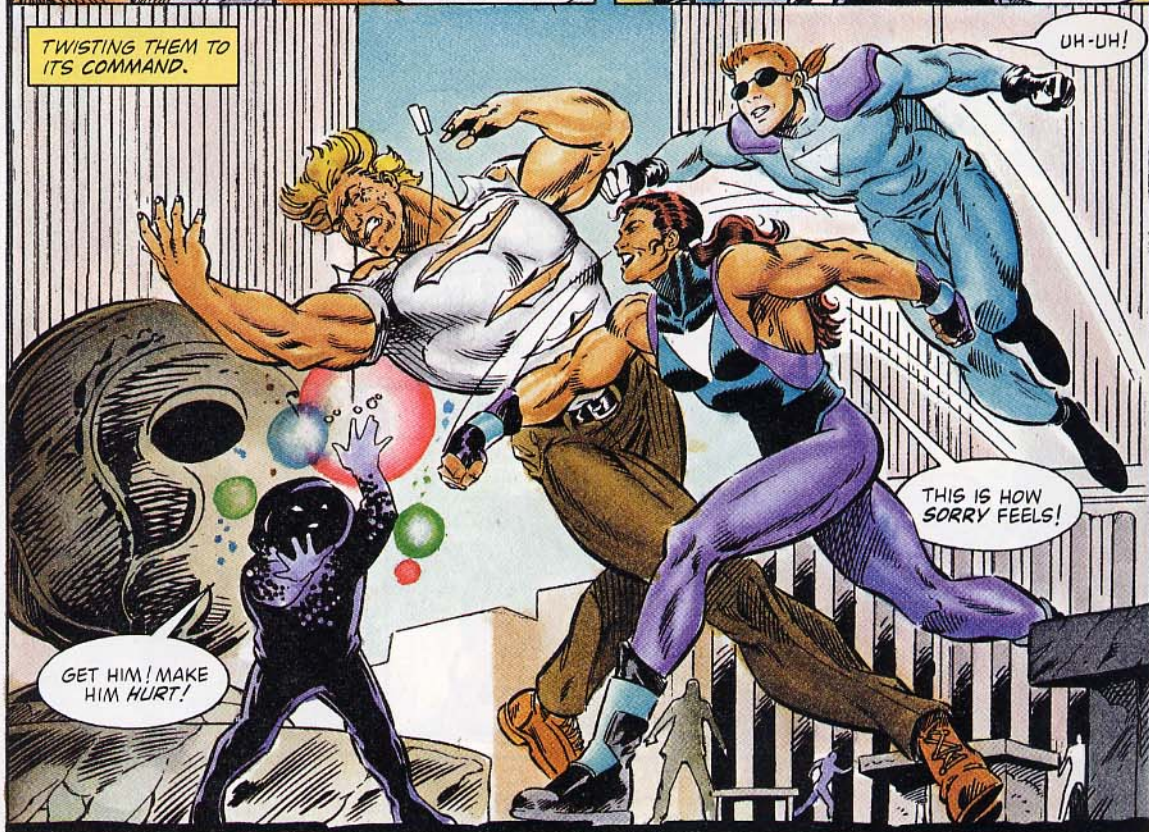
WELL IT'S GREAT
TO SEE YOU GUYS
AGAIN!

ESPECIALLY...
ESPECIALLY YOU,
FLEX!

TRYING TO FIND
MICHAEL ALEXANDER'S
PLACE IS GETTING ME
NOWHERE!

OH, I GUESS THE REST
OF US BUST MIRRORS
WITH OUR FACES?







SELF-TAUGHT TRAINING
IN THE JUNGLES OF
WARTIME VIETNAM
HELPED HONE A YOUNG
CHARLES' REFLEXES.



I GUESS THIS MEANS
I SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH
THE CANDY AND
FLOWERS, HUH?



HRRM... JOKE
ALL YOU
WANT, CHARLES...



THEN JUST TRY
LAUGHING WITH
NO TEETH!

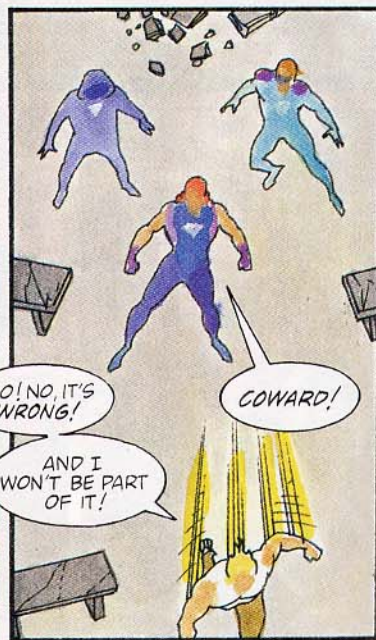


FLEX! THIS--
THIS IS OUT
OF CONTROL!



YEAH.

AIN'T IT
GREAT?



NO! NO, IT'S
WRONG!

COWARD!

AND I
WON'T BE PART
OF IT!

UH... WHY'D WE DO THAT TO CHARLES?

I-- I DON'T KNOW, SPELLCASTER.

AND NEW YORK'S SUPPOSED TO BE SUCH A GENTLE TOWN...

AMERICAN AIRLINES
FLIGHT 06407 TO
NEW YORK CITY.

MANY SLEEP FITFULLY
ON THE LONG FLIGHT
OVER THE CONTINENTS.

BUT LE XUAN WON'T REST UNTIL SHE'S BACK IN THE ARMS OF THE MAN SHE KNEW AS A BOY.

UNION SQUARE PARK.

I LOST OUT ON A LOT OF LIFE EXPERIENCES WHILE I WAS IN THAT COMA FOR ALL THOSE YEARS... BUT THAT WAS NO REASON TO ACT LIKE THAT WITH FLEX!

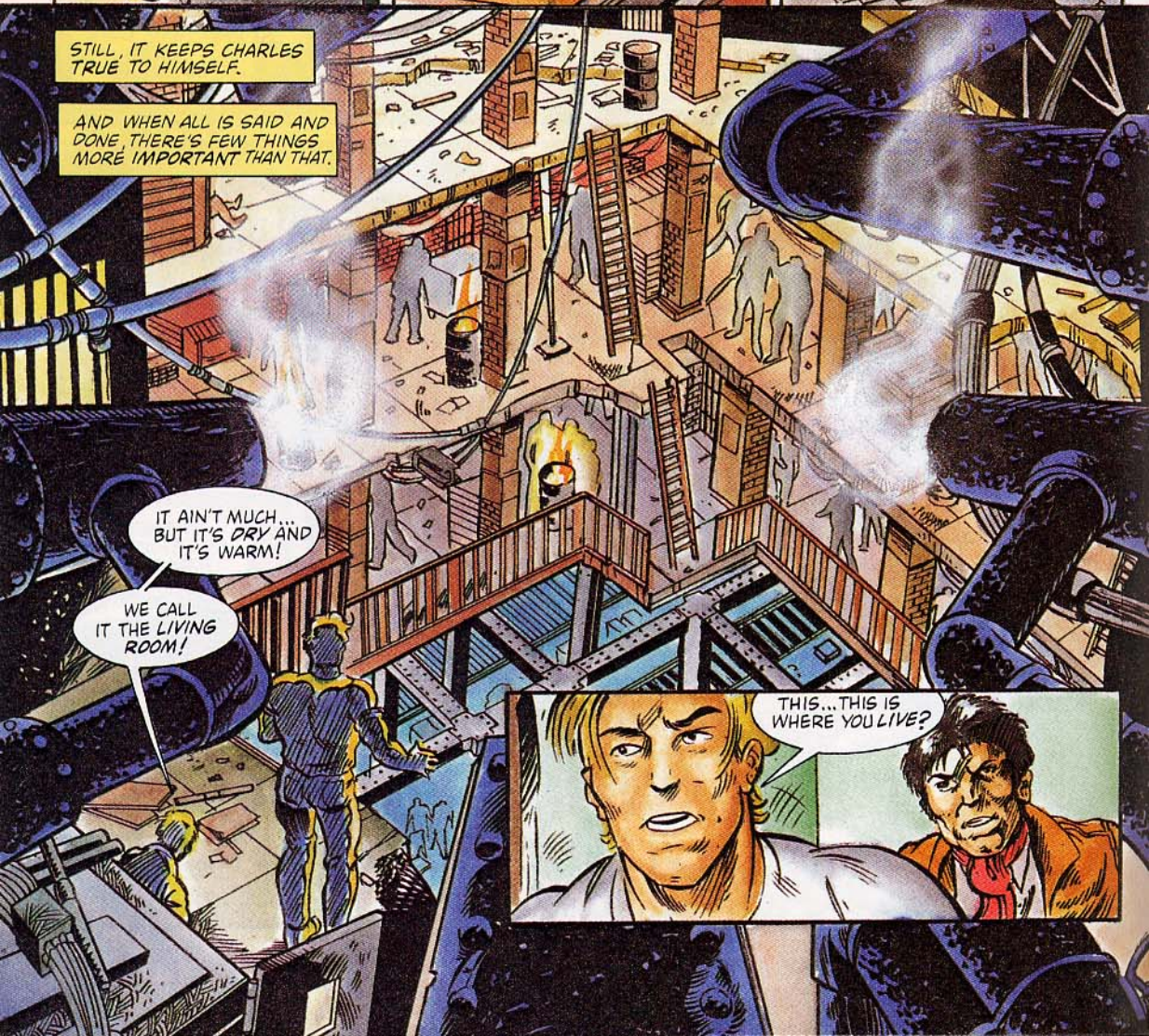
SLIPPING A FEW EXTRA BUCKS IN MY SHOE WAS THE ONLY SMART THING I'VE DONE RECENTLY.

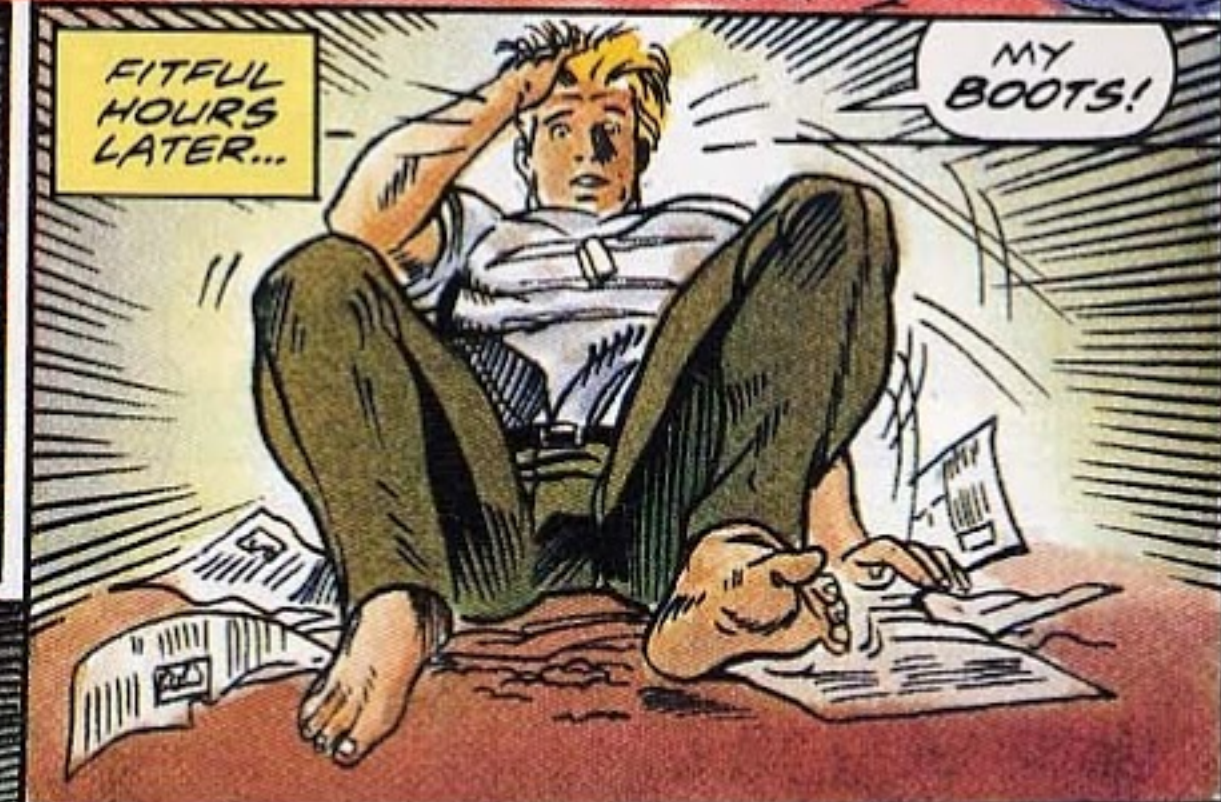
NOW I DON'T HAVE TO STARVE UNTIL TOMORROW.

NO NEED FOR THAT, FRIEND.

HEY, YOU'RE THE GUY I GAVE THE SANDWICH TO!

KINDNESS LIKE THAT ISN'T FORGOTTEN.









WASSA MATTER, "SUPERMAN"?

FORGET HOW TO FLY?



STRONG HANDS SLIP ON THE GORE COATING THE LEDGE...

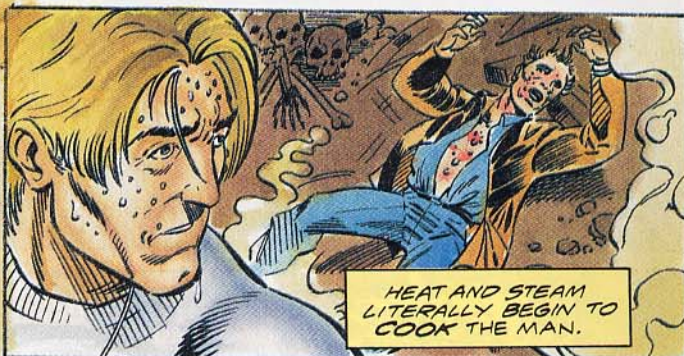
...EVIDENCE OF A LONG HISTORY OF ATROCITY.

N-NO...

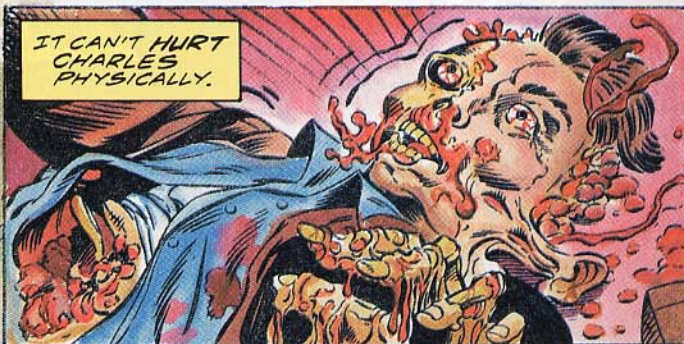


HERE'S YOUR BUDDY YOU WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT!

WHAT'S-- WHAT'S HAPPENING TO--?



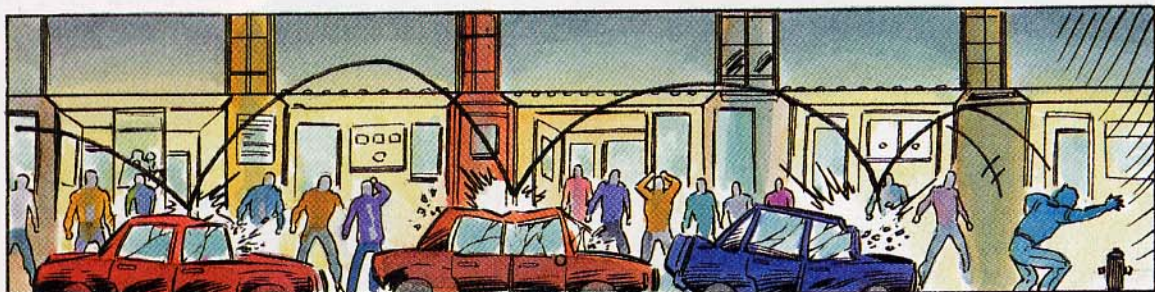
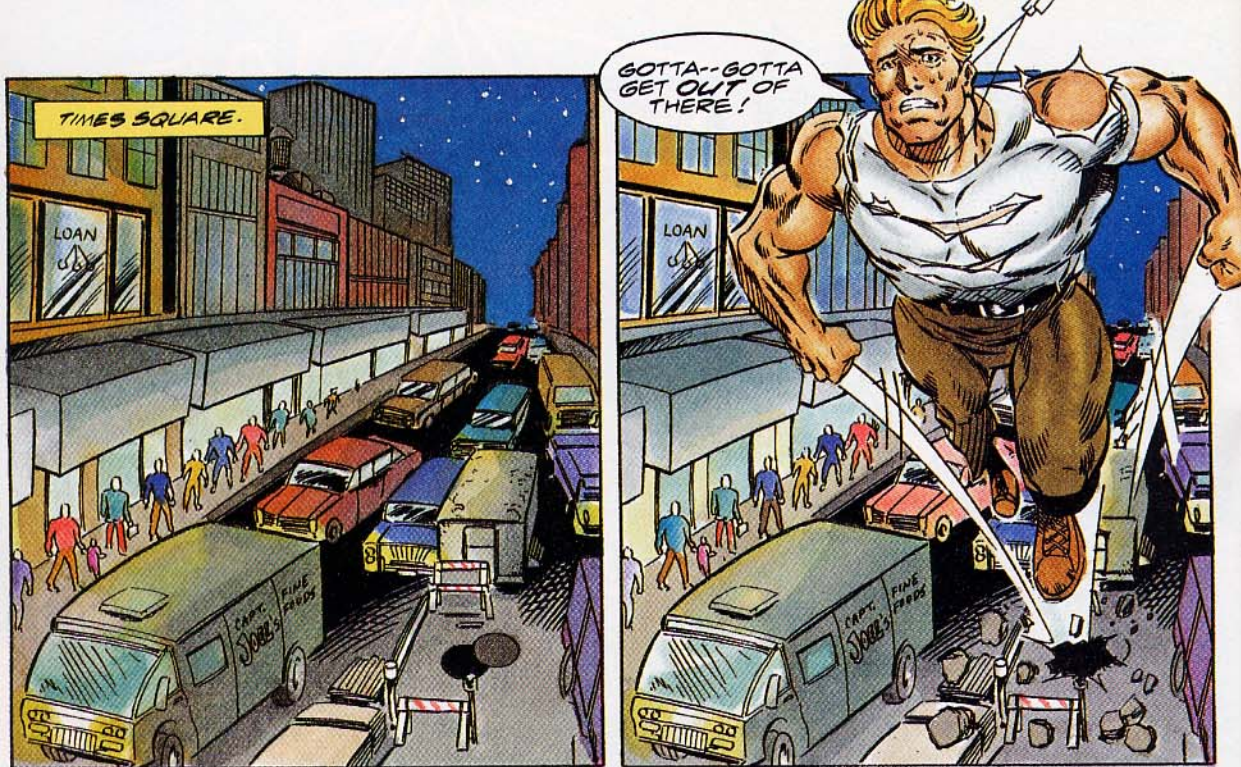
HEAT AND STEAM LITERALLY BEGIN TO COOK THE MAN.

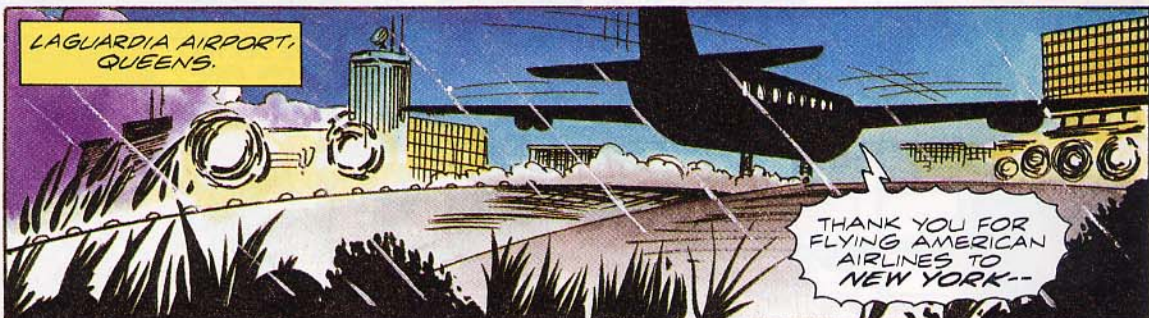
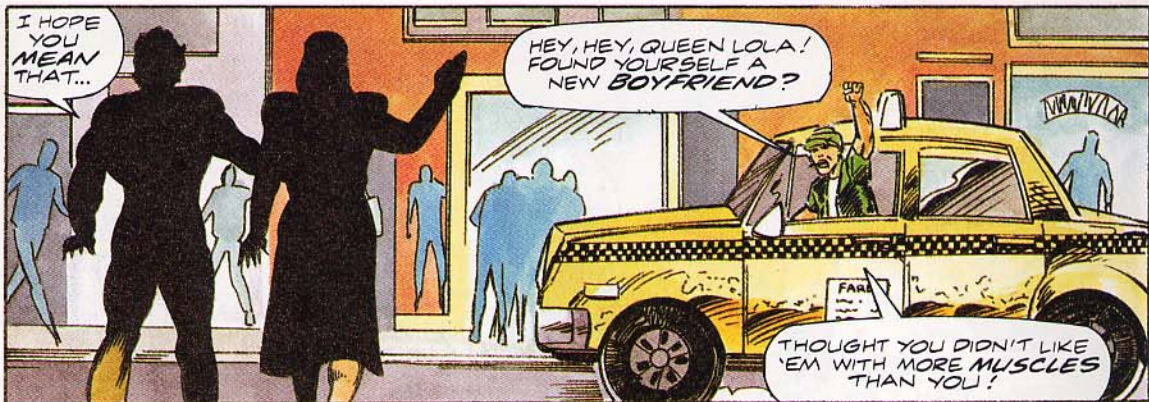


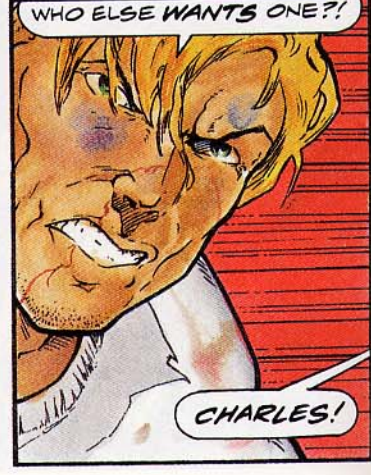
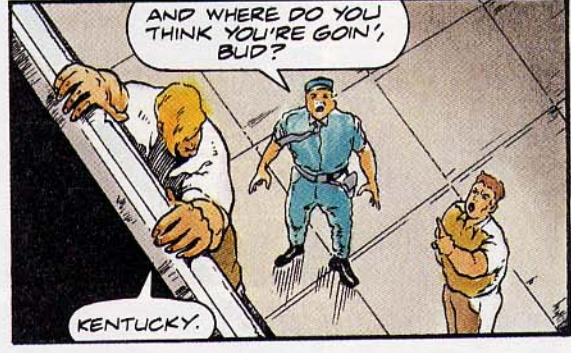
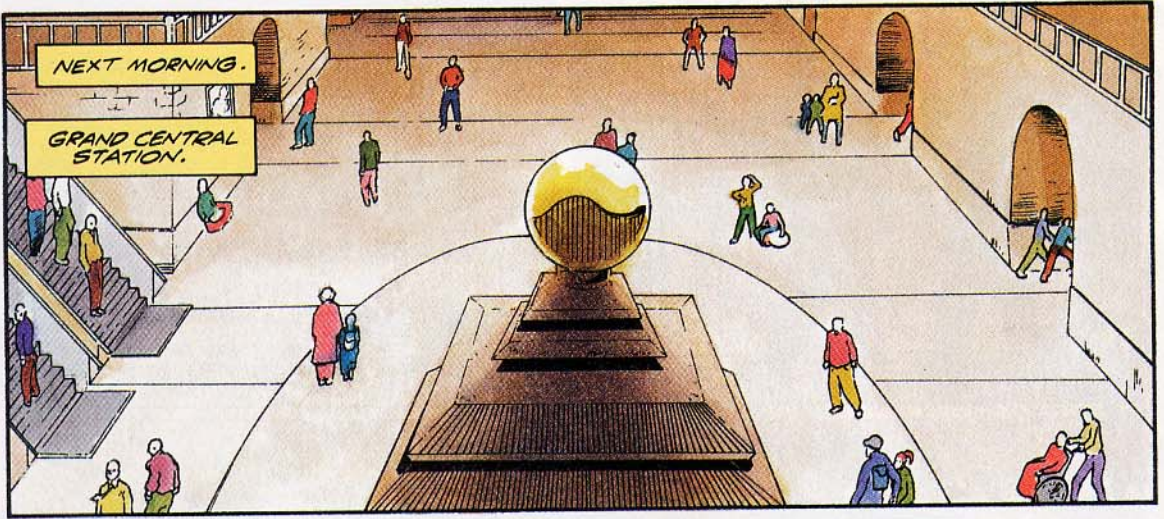
IT CAN'T HURT CHARLES PHYSICALLY.



THAT DOESN'T MAKE THE SIGHT ANY EASIER TO DEAL WITH.









YOU KNOW
THIS
PIECE A'
GARBAGE,
LADY?

NOT LIKE
HE IS
NOW, NO.

I KNEW HIM
WHEN HE WAS
YOUNG AND
NOBLE AND
SEARCHING
FOR THE MOST
IMPORTANT
PERSON IN HIS
LIFE.

I HAVE NEVER
FORGOTTEN HIM.
AND I CAN ONLY
HOPE HE HOLDS
ME IN THE SAME
PLACE IN HIS
HEART.



LE XUAN?



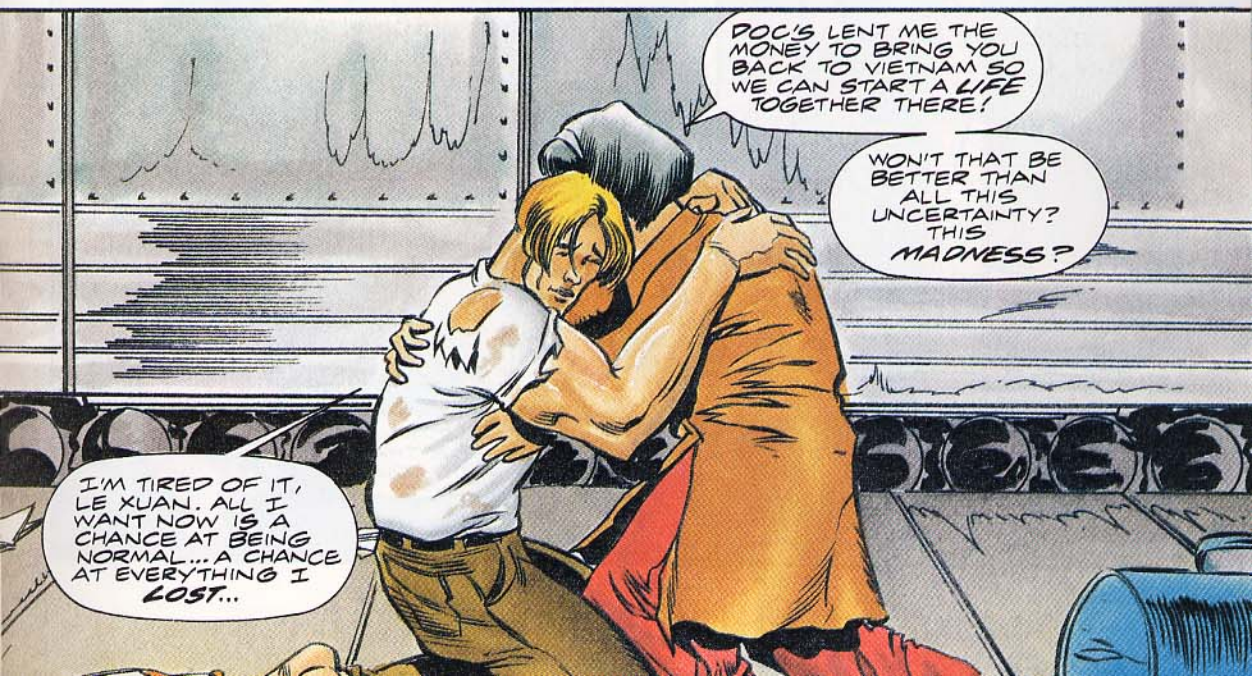
YOU REMEMBER.



I CAN'T
BELIEVE IT, I
NEVER THOUGHT
I'D **SEE** YOU
AGAIN!



THERE'S NOTHING
MORE TO **WORRY**
OVER, DEAR
CHARLES!



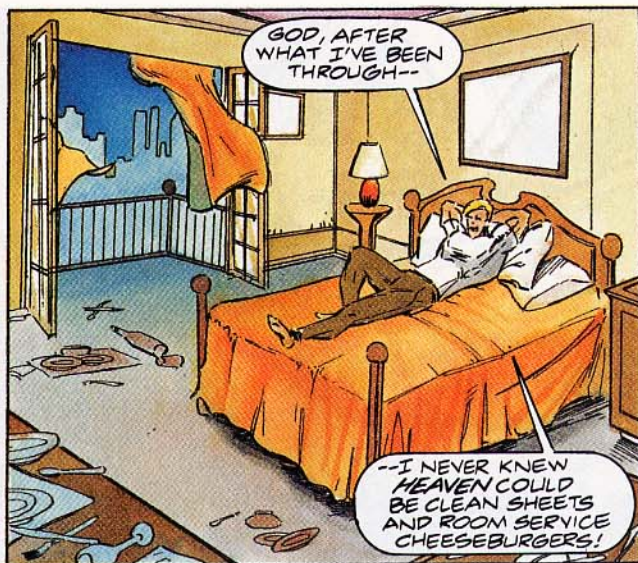
DOC'S LENT ME THE
MONEY TO BRING YOU
BACK TO VIETNAM SO
WE CAN START A **LIFE**
TOGETHER THERE!

WON'T THAT BE
BETTER THAN
ALL THIS
UNCERTAINTY?
THIS
MADNESS?

I'M TIRED OF IT,
LE XUAN. ALL I
WANT NOW IS A
CHANCE AT BEING
NORMAL... A CHANCE
AT EVERYTHING I
LOST...

DUSK, THE
SAME DAY.

THE PLAZA
HOTEL.



DON'T COUNT ME OUT OF YOUR
FORMULA FOR PARADISE, CHARLES.

BELIEVE ME,
YOU'RE WAY
UP THE LIST!

YOU KNOW, IT'S
HARD TO EVEN
REMEMBER WHY
I CAME TO NEW
YORK! WITH YOU
SO CLOSE, THE
REST IS SO MUCH
LESS IMPORTANT!



WHAT'S IT BEEN,
18 YEARS SINCE
I MET YOU AT
DOC'S PARTY?

YES.
SINCE THAT
NIGHT...
EVEN THEN
I KNEW YOU
WERE
SPECIAL.

AND
THEN
YOU
WENT
TO
THE
VILLAGE
OF HUNG
DAO--



--TO FIND PETE
AND THEN
THE ATTACK.
ALL THAT
PAIN.

YOU NEED MORE
PLEASURE IN
YOUR LIFE!



LET ME
GIVE THAT
TO YOU...



UPPER
MONTCLAIR,
NEW JERSEY.

COOKIE!
YOU'VE BEEN
SITTING
THERE FOR
HOURS!



WHAT ARE YOU
THINKING ABOUT?

NOT SO MUCH "ABOUT"
AS "AT", RUTH. GETTING
INTO PEOPLE'S HEADS
LONG DISTANCE--
GETTING THEM TO DO
WHAT I WANT.



COOKIE,
THIS ISN'T
LIKE YOU...

I CAN'T ESCAPE
WHAT NEEDS
DOING, SIS.

THINKING FOR
OTHERS IS DIRTY
WORK. MAYBE
I'LL WASH UP.



THE PLAZA.

I WANT A LIFE
WITH YOU SO MUCH,
MY "BEAUTIFUL
SPRING"-- MAYBE
MORE THAN I
SHOULD!

WHERE HAVE YOU
BEEN ALL THIS
TIME? DOC, HE
WOULDN'T TELL
ME ABOUT YOU
WHEN I ASKED.

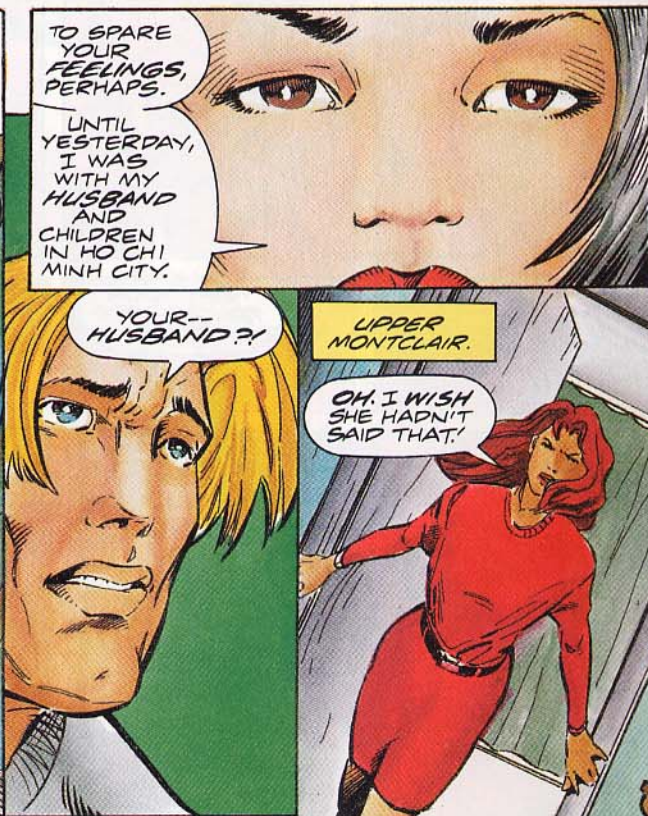
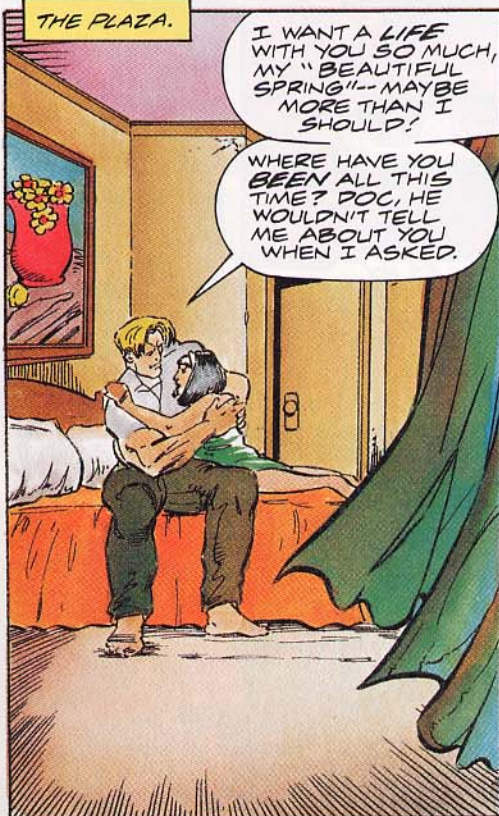
TO SPARE
YOUR
FEELINGS,
PERHAPS.

UNTIL
YESTERDAY,
I WAS
WITH MY
HUSBAND
AND
CHILDREN
IN HO CHI
MINH CITY.

YOUR--
HUSBAND?!

UPPER
MONTCLAIR.

OH. I WISH
SHE HADN'T
SAID THAT!



THE PLAZA.



YOU'VE MADE A COMMITMENT TO THEM! THIS ISN'T RIGHT BETWEEN US!

YOU CAN SAY THAT, CHARLES--



UPPER MONTCLAIR.



-- BUT WORDS ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR FEELING!

-- BUT WORDS ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR FEELING!



YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR TOUCH DOES FOR ME!



LET MY TOUCH--



-- DO THE SAME FOR YOU!



AND MORE...





AND MORE...

NO! NO MORE!

IT'S WRONG, LE XUAN! THIS IS SO MUCH OF WHAT I'VE EVER WANTED-- BUT NOT THIS WAY!

-- I'M NOT PUTTING MYSELF OVER SOMEONE ELSE! YOU'RE GOING BACK TO YOUR FAMILY!



MY... MY FAMILY...

THEY HAVE TO WAIT, CHARLES! YOU AND I ARE WHAT'S IMPORTANT!



WE MUST BE TOGETHER!



I'LL KILL MYSELF IF YOU DON'T COME AWAY WITH ME!



YOU'RE ACTING NUTS, LE XUAN-- AND I DON'T THINK YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!



DECIDE, CHARLES.



KRAK-DOOM

WHAT--?!



YOU CAN'T-- YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME!

WHOEVER'S PULLING YOUR STRINGS HAS LED US-- ME-- ON THIS LONG!

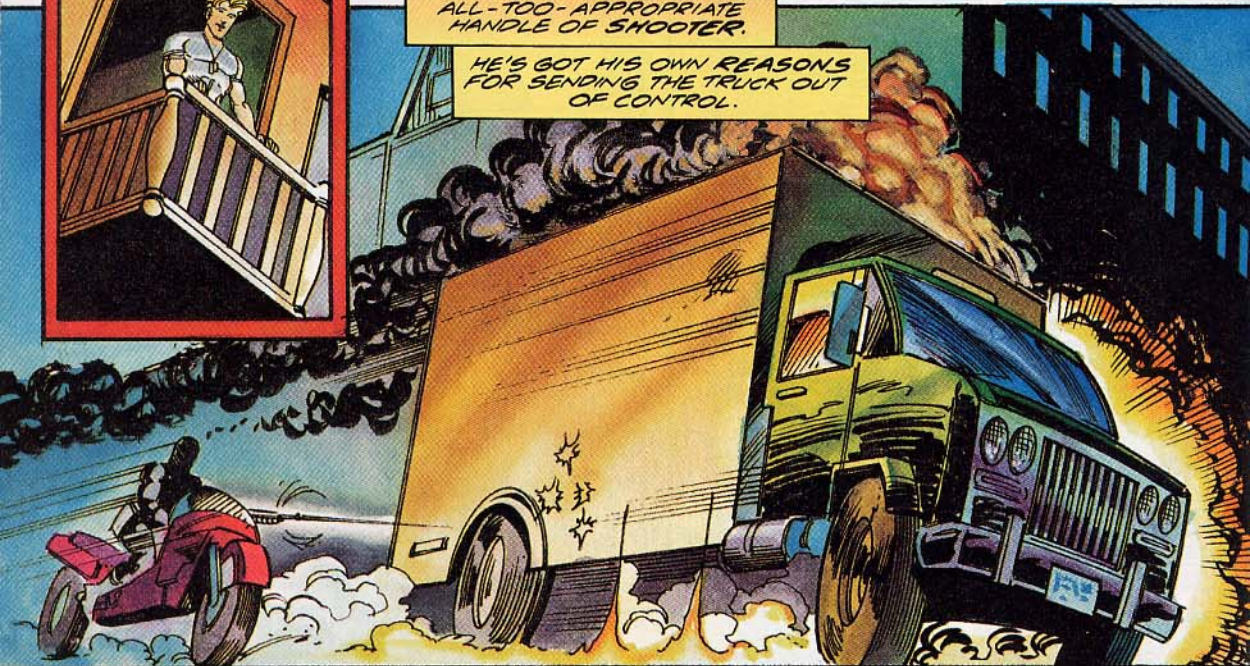
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET YOU REALLY GET HURT!

WHAT'S GOING
ON OUT HERE
IS ANOTHER
STORY!

THE BIKER IS LT. ELVIS P. MAZEROV,
U.S. ARMY RESERVES--

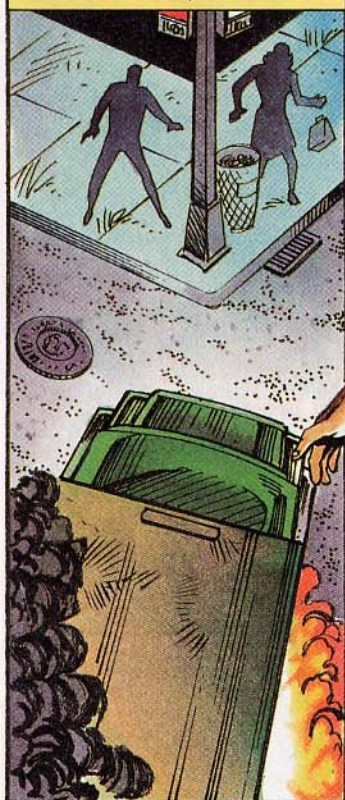
--A DOG OF WAR WITH THE
ALL-TOO-APPROPRIATE
HANDLE OF SHOOTER.

HE'S GOT HIS OWN REASONS
FOR SENDING THE TRUCK OUT
OF CONTROL.



AND NOT A THOUGHT FOR
THE CONSEQUENCES.

BUT CHARLES SMITH
CAN THINK OF NOTHING
ELSE.



HE'S NOT
STOPPING!

--TOO FAST
WE CAN'T--

AND WHEN THIS MAN PUTS
HIS MIND TO SOMETHING,
THOUGHT BECOMES ACTION.

DON'T WORRY--
I'VE GOT YOU
COVERED!

I'D STAY
AN' THANK
YA...

...BUT I GOTTA
GO HOME AN'
CHANGE MY
SHORTS!

THE TRUCK IS FLAMING
DEATH ON FOUR WHEELS.

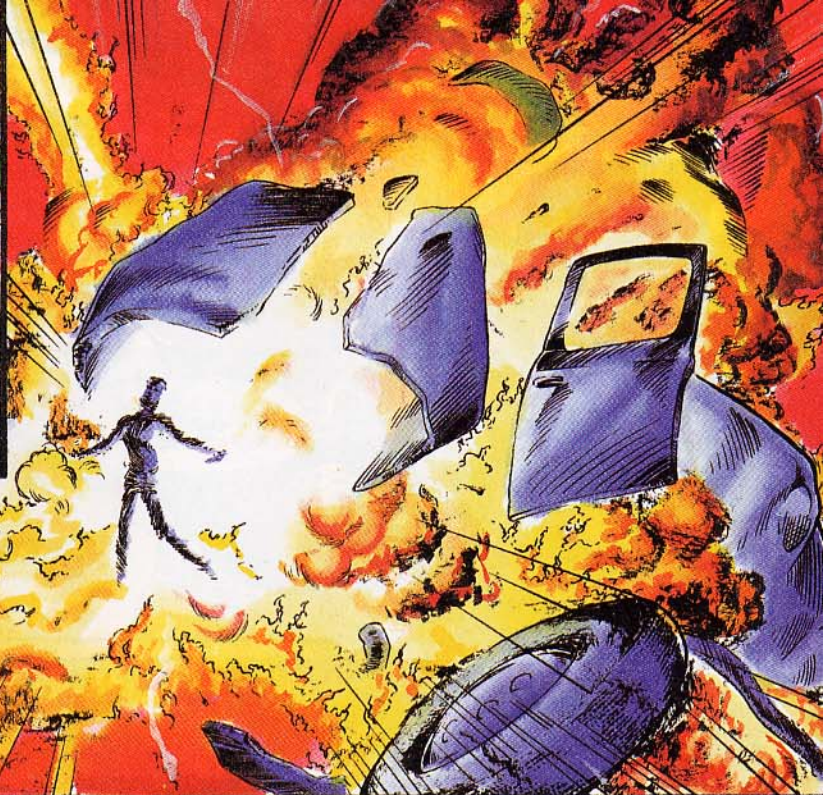
IT OUTWEIGHS HIM BY TONS.

NONE OF IT
MATTERS.

ALL THAT MATTERS
IS CHARLES SMITH'S
FORCE OF WILL.

AND WHETHER
IT IS UP TO THE
TASK AT HAND.

NICE
SHOW,
MUSCLES.





THANK YOU... I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT BUT THAT WAS INCREDIBLE! I MEAN-- WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? HOW--

S'CUSE US MAN, WHAT SHE'S TRYING TO SAY IS--

--YOU SAVED OUR LIVES... IF YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP WHEN YOU DID...



...WE WOULD HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT, THANKS.

NO, THANK YOU! YOU'VE HELPED REMIND ME OF WHAT I'M HERE FOR.



...SOMETHING I STARTED FORGETTING AFTER THAT LADY IN THE PARK MESSED WITH MY HEAD!



UPPER MONTCLAIR.

OMIGOD!

HOW DID YOU--?!



'CAUSE YOU'VE BEEN IN MY HEAD--



--SO LONG AND SO LOUD I COULD FOLLOW THE NOISE RIGHT BACK TO THE SOURCE!

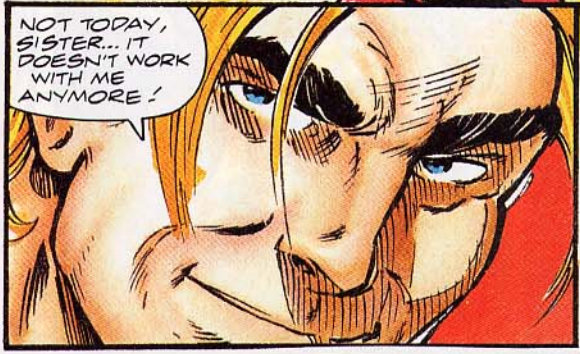
IT'S NOT EASY TO HONE IN ON SOMEONE, CHARLES.

YOU PICK UP ON THINGS PRETTY QUICK--ANOTHER IMPRESSIVE TALENT!

NOW PICK UP ON THIS--



--YOU'RE GIVING UP YOUR HUNT FOR THE DANCER!



NOT TODAY, SISTER... IT DOESN'T WORK WITH ME ANYMORE!

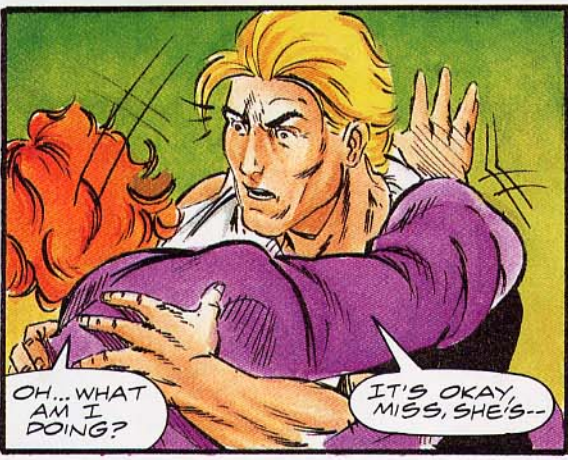


THAT'S OKAY. MAYBE YOU CAN RESIST-- BUT MY SISTER CAN'T! JUMP HIM, RUTHY!

W-WHAT?



YEA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY HOUSE! GET OUT!



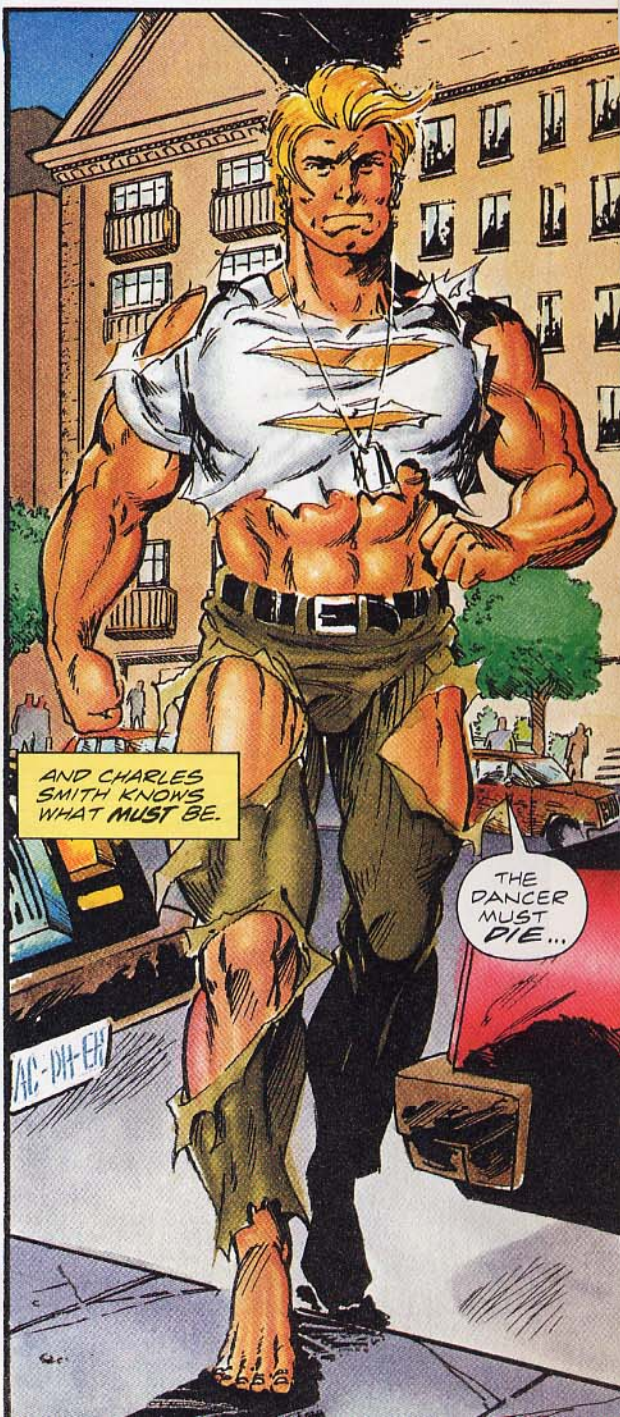
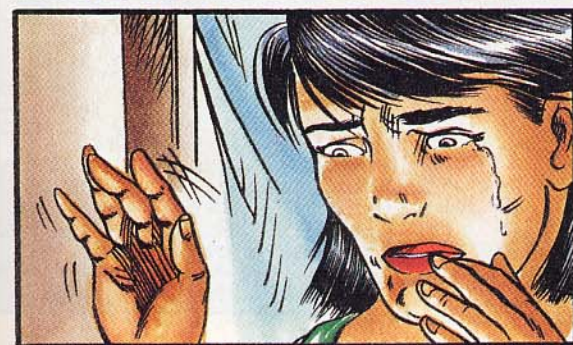
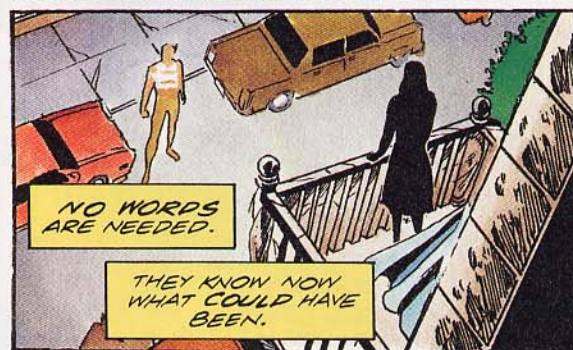
OH... WHAT AM I DOING?

IT'S OKAY, MISS, SHE'S--



--GONE! SHE USED YOU TO COVER WHILE SHE BOOKED!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS.





CHICHESTER, POLLINA AND
OCLAIR RETURN NEXT MONTH IN
"ONE MAN CAN"